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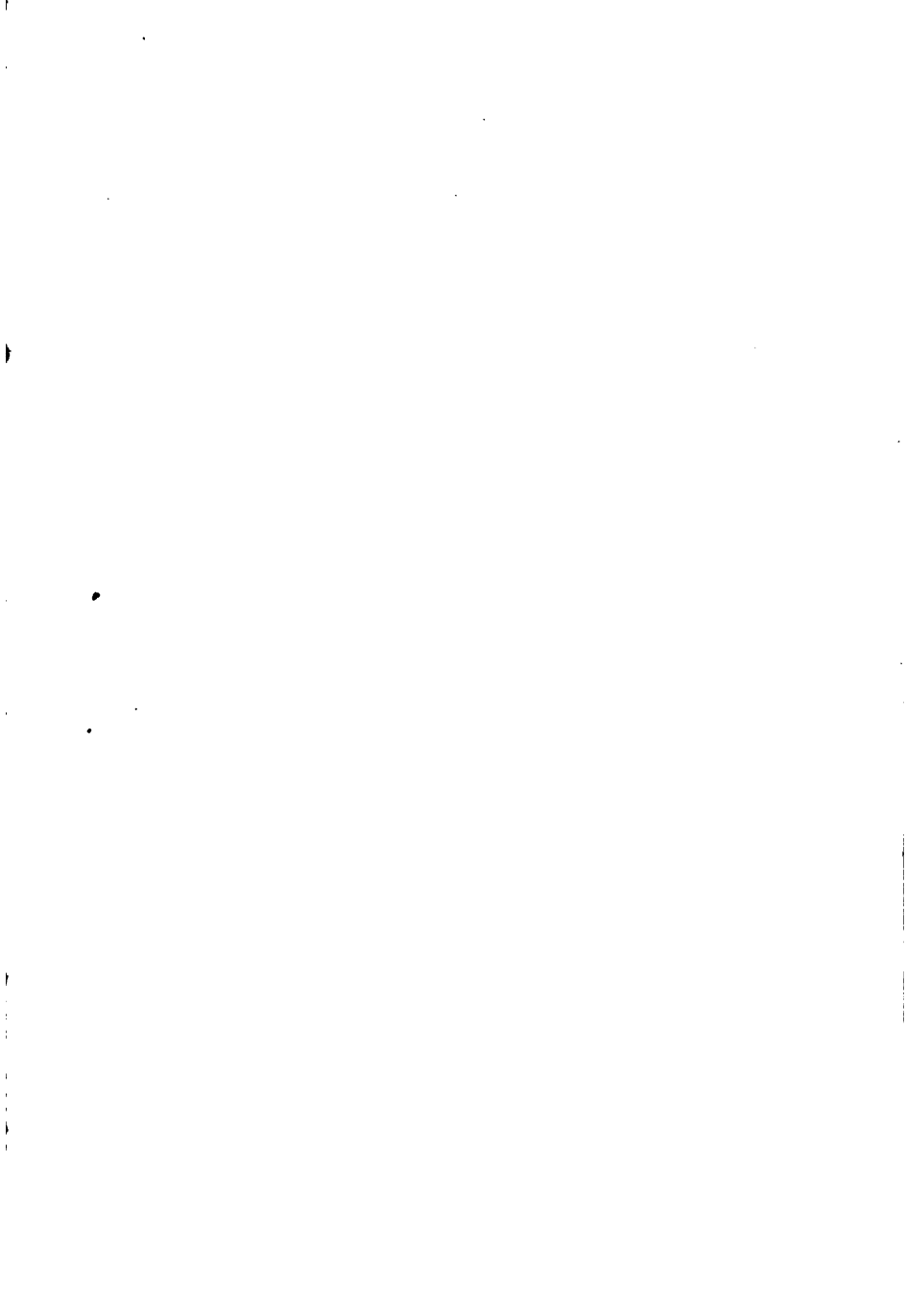
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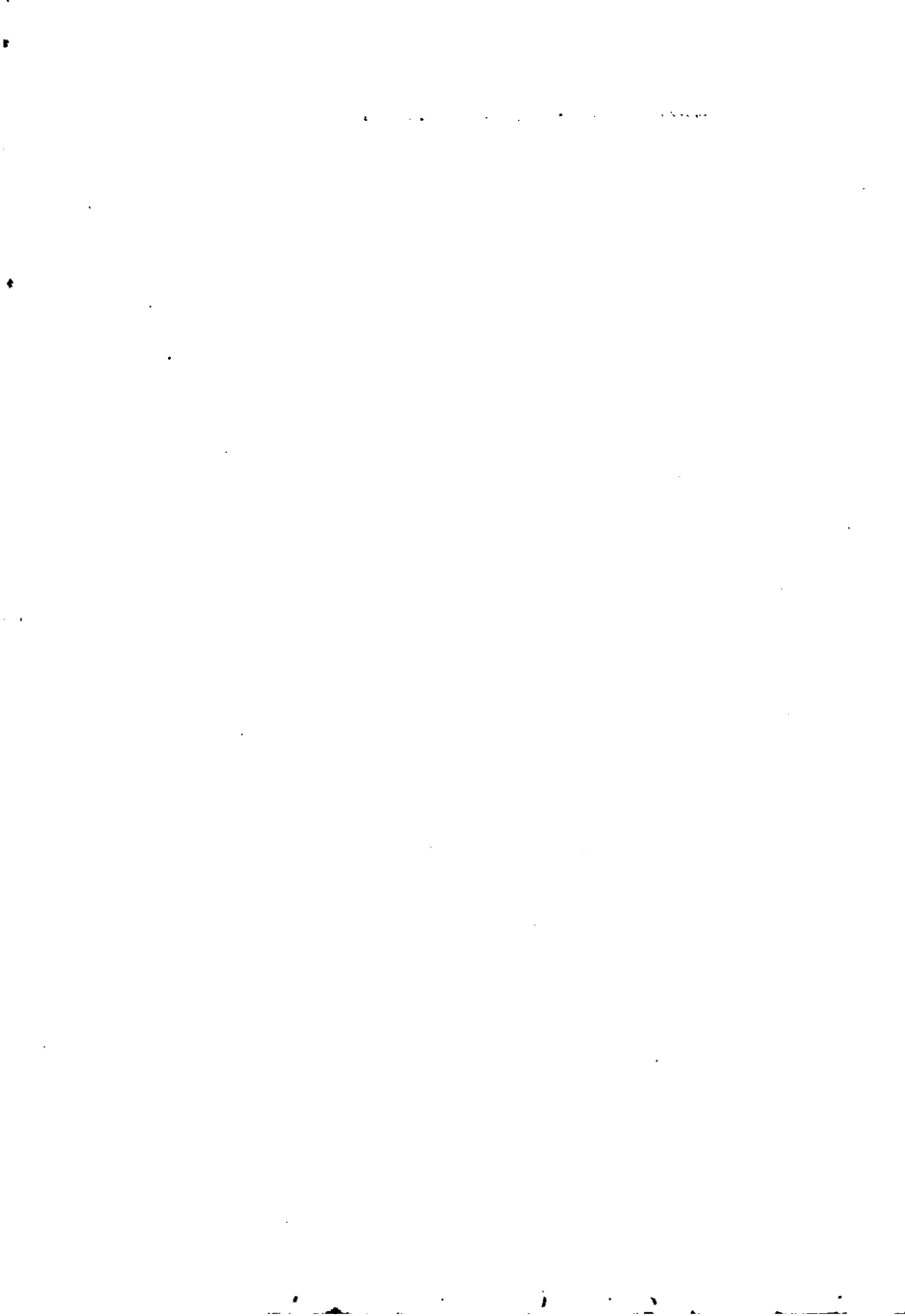
A Parable of the Rose
and Other Poems

By Lyman Whitney Allen









**A PARABLE OF THE ROSE
AND OTHER POEMS**

By LYMAN WHITNEY ALLEN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. *A Poem.*

Centennial (Third) Edition.

This poem was awarded the prize offered by the New York Herald, in 1895. The Centennial Edition, the third, has been revised and enlarged.

A PARABLE OF THE ROSE AND OTHER POEMS

A Parable of the Rose

And Other Poems

By
Lyman Whitney Allen
//

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1908

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CALIFORNIA

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BY

LYMAN WHITNEY ALLEN

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

TO VIMU
AIRPORT LKO

TO PHEBE

I cannot find in shop or mart
The things which thou dost value high;
For things can never satisfy
A mountain nature risen apart

From valley creatures, coveting
Life, vision, music, poesie,—
The ripest fruits of Wisdom's tree,
Imagination's eye and wing.

Therefore I give thee of life's yield
My treasures, garnered year by year,—
Some bits of heavenly atmosphere,
Some gleams the peaks of joy revealed,

Some finer strains of faith whose lilt
Is music strange, to thee not strange
Since thou hast had ascension range
Where skyey domes of seers are built.

These are a spirit's soaring thrifts
Got 'twixt the rhythms of Love and Fate,—
A poet's soul articulate,
A poet's songs—his choicest gifts.

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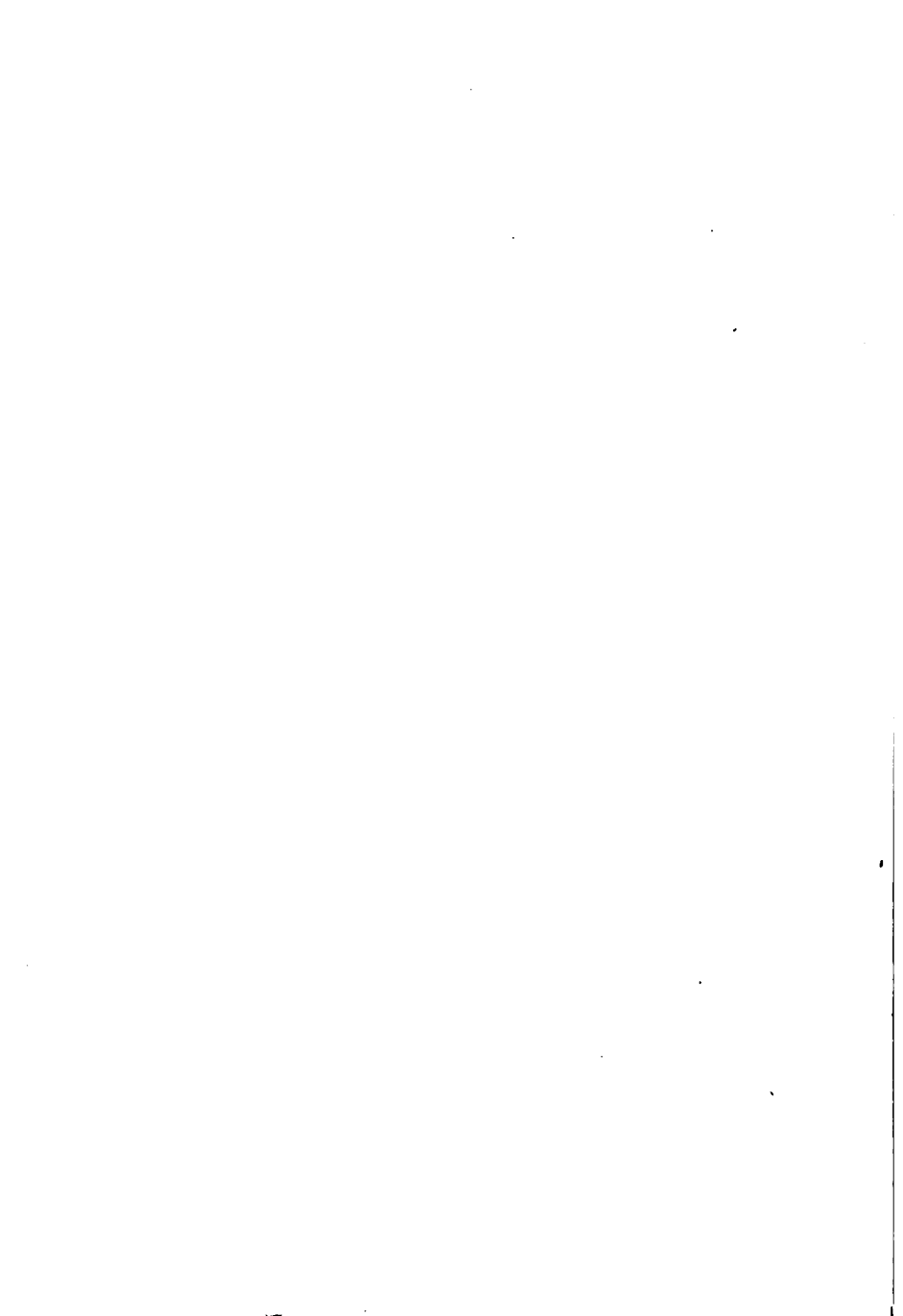
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A PARABLE OF THE ROSE.

A POET dreamed a matin dream
Most mystical, most true;
His soul beheld a pageant gleam
Against th' illumined blue.
As real did the sight appear,
With skyey landscape spell,
As ever shone before trouvère,
Lorris or Clopinel.
And one who gazed with tranced heart
Upon this holy Thing,
Were recreant to Love and Art
If he refused to sing.

Creative visions come in days

When noontide's splendor fades
Beneath the firmamental rays

Of Love's white overshades.
These are celestial signs that show
Love's sovereign ebb and flow;
The imagery of Providence
That heightens soul and sense,
And sets Life's perfect paradigm
Before the world in rime.

There loomed the garden of a King,—

A garden such as poet eye
Had ne'er beholden,—opening
Through crystal portals wide and high;
A barred and battlemented close
Of bloom, perfume, adagios

Of fountains murmurous, melodies

From woodland quires and meadow broods

Of birds symphonious, fruiting trees

And trees umbrageous, broidered roods

Of rest, delight's similitudes,

Processions hymnic, jocund forms,

In train of Love's each new surprise,

With dancing feet, and radiant swarms

Of children playing circlewise

In angelhood's disguise.

The poet wandered to and fro,

And gladness filled his heart.

His nature ne'er before did know

Such promptings unto art.

Each scented waft of atmosphere

Was inspiration strong and clear.

Before the poet's loitering feet

A rosebush stood, and on it shone

One great white Rose full-blown.

Its creamy petals, oversweet,

Shed fragrance of such high degree,

Such musky sorcery,

That all the garden seemed to sense

Its quickening redolence.

About it spread a circle fair

Of angels with long folded wings,

Who guarded with ecstatic care

This Rose of which the poet sings;

And round it ranged a shining row

Of saints, whose blessed eyes bespake

Large wonder, chanting sweet and low

Life's rapture for Love's sake.

And one fair saint high Love bequeathed
In days of earlier bliss
Bent o'er it tenderly and breathed
One long ascension kiss,
And lifted her white hands and blessed,
A prescience in her eyes,
The Rose with such enamoured zest,—
For this was Paradise,—
That as he gazed the Rose and She
Seemed mixed in sacred unity.

But none might touch the great white Rose
That grew within the garden's close.
This was the garden of the King,
And this the King's beloved flower
Full-blown for Him. Each lesser thing
Of amaranthine mead or bower

All might possess; but Kinghood's mind
Delight above delights designed,
And fashioned to art's last degree
A royal Rose for Royalty.

The poet gazed, and o'er his soul
Wave after wave of rapture stole.
His lips were dumb; his eyes were fixed
Upon the flower; what glamour mixed
With glory! In its deep rich heart
A dewdrop lay. What rightful part
Had he by sufferance in such bloom
That filled the garden with perfume?

The poet waited long beside
The Rose, and grew more mystified.

He breathed its odors,—but to dare
 To touch it!—nay, it was the King's;
It was enough to have some share
 Of saints' and angels' sorcerings.

At last he heard the rhythmic feet
 Of the approaching King; and bowed
Beside the Rose, feeling its sweet
 Wild joyance round him like a cloud
Of passionate incense flame and swing
To greet the coming of the King.
 He bowed, but dared not lift his eyes;
 This was the Lord of Paradise.

He sensed the patience of his soul
 Become high burgeoning, while all

His mystic feelings seemed to roll
From joy to joy seraphical
Up Nature's every opened aisle
With hope's delirious overflows
That shook the flowers and stirred the file
Of angels round the great white Rose.

The King stood still, and from his eyes
The love that fashioned Paradise
Illumed Him, while His lips, bedewed
With sweetness, breathed beatitude;
And all the saints and seraphim
Bowed low adoringly to Him.

The King came to the great white Rose
That grew within His garden's close;
And bending o'er it with a kiss,
While every petal shook with bliss

And the pale chalice glowed and flamed,
The Lord of Paradise exclaimed:

“O Rose, My Rose, I planted here

And tended, thou hast bloomed at last !
So full, so white thou dost appear!

Thou hast My early faith surpassed!
Thou art the rose I hoped would be
When in great love I cultured thee!”

With this He stooping plucked the flower

And pressed it to His lips. Again
The fluttering birds in every bower

Warbled, while all the children fain
With saints and angels raised their eyes
In holy rapture toward the skies.

“O Rose, My Rose! thou shalt fulfil
At last thy mission and My will.

The King's white roses all are grown
For the King's singers,—them alone."

And all the garden seemed to gleam
 With the new joy; the poet heard
Sweet tides of holy music stream
 From distant hills; bird after bird
Mixed dulcet strains in orchards near
With children's laughter sweet and clear;
 And all the angels shook their wings
 In mystic ravishings.

And one glad saint stood forth and bent
A moment o'er the poet, sent
 One flash of love into his breast,
 One testimonial kiss impressed,
Then slowly rose and stood beside
The shining King beatified.

Then turned the King of Paradise

Full on the poet, held the flower

Above him quivering, while his eyes

Shone with such grace, such regnant power,

That every soul was caught and swayed

By holy Love's divinest art.

Then smiled the King, and stooping laid

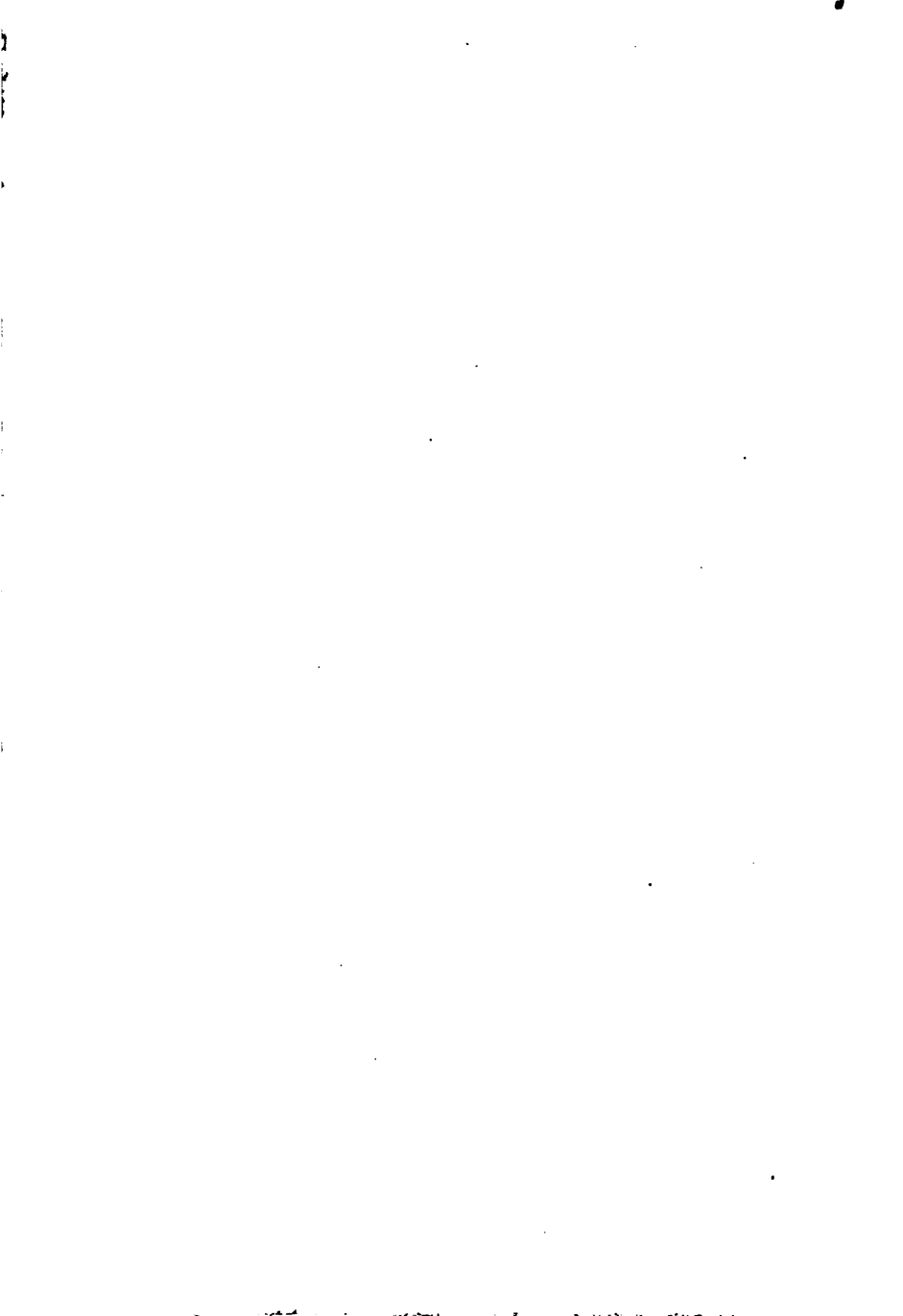
The Rose upon the poet's heart;

And as he clasped the peerless thing

The King exclaimed: "Now, Poet, sing!"



CANZONETS.



I.

LENSES OF DELIGHT.

TO pray, and know the heavens are open
wide

To send down every grace;
To live, and feel a woman's heart beside
To gladden every place;
To dream with her, and watch the tender blue
For every wonder new;

This is to rise and breathe the purer air
Off lofty mountain crest;
Behold the further stretch of shining stair
On which high spirits rest;
And e'er where vanished ministrants have trod,
Perceive the form of God.

Sky visions seen through lenses of delight
Set in a woman's eyes;
And music, heard through passionate lips be-
dight
With Love's vermilion dyes,—
These are the feeders to a poet's lays
Which after ages praise.

II.

O'ER RIME'S CONFUSION.

THOU camest, oh so sorcerously sweet!
One matin hour of eld,
My wingèd Hope! and, at thy shrinal feet,
Since then mine art has held
Each song-wrought censer of my soul's desire,
For Love's empyreal fire.

Flaming o'er rime's confusion thou didst come
Upon my trancèd heart:
Thy miracle struck every prophet dumb,
And my tumultuous art
Awoke to see, from gleam to gleam along,
Love's Bethel steps of song.

Thou art Love's angel with forbidding sword
Guarding Arcadian state;
The poet's moods, the poet's music stored
Within Love's templed gate,
Which thou alone mak'st radiant passage through
Down from th' unstained blue.

III.

FROM AERY LEASHES.

M^Y wingèd Faith thou art, and thou art
here,

From aery leashes slipped,—
My constant vision, my enduring seer,
My life's apocalypt;
My priestess at the altar of romance,
My spirit's puissance.

Nor lips nor lute can tell the ecstasy
Thine orisons bestow;
Responsive founts of psychic power set free
In music's mystic flow.
Thy love is my cathedral sheltering,
'Neath which I dream and sing.

Regeneration's bread! I eat and free
My soul from earth's domain;
Imagination's wine! I drink and see
The sky's superior grain;
And life, from glory unto glory spent,
Is one long sacrament.

IV.

MY SKYEY SHEPHERDESS.

THERE is a shining garden far away
Walled from the common sight;
An orchard of green palms, a wide array
Of roses red and white,
And tender violets whose azure eyes
Bespeak Love's paradise.

Here is Love's music, such as never feels
The insufficient lyre;
Here is Love's perfect rapture at the heels
Of perfected desire;
And here the poet wanders with his Muse
Down fancy's avenues.

With eyes to see, with ears to hear, with heart
 To sense the universe
As must the seraphim, thou giv'st mine art
 The things thy thoughts rehearse;
The finer things of darkness and of light,
And Love's interior sight.

For Love alone that is the world's eclipse
 The heights of song I scale;
Thine eyes the sorcery of the peaks, thy lips
 The witchery of the vale.
And my enchanted thoughts do reverence
To thy diviner sense.

Thou art Love's warden on the stormy steep
 Where poet frenzy leads;

Or where 'mid sunny meadows verdured deep

His browsing fancy feeds;

Thou art the surety of my song's success,

My skyey Shepherdess!

SAN GABRIEL.

SAN Gabriel!

I stand and wonder at thy walls
So old, so quaint; a glory falls
Upon them as I view the past,
And read the story which thou hast
Preserved so well.

San Gabriel!

I gaze and marvel at thy towers,
Thy belfry strange through which the hours
Fleet-footed crowd two hundred years,
Whose echoing music yet appears
In each sweet bell.

San Gabriel!

What souls were they who fashioned thee
To be a blessed charity!
What faith was theirs who bore the cross,
And counted wealth and ease but loss
Of Christ to tell!

San Gabriel!

Before thy gates what heavy tolls
Have fallen from sin-burdened souls!
Within thy walls what new desires
Of love have quenched fierce hatred's fires,
From nave and cell!

San Gabriel!

What guidance hast thou flashed along
The ways of savagery and wrong,

And shamed th' unholy and unkind,
The theftuous hand, the murderous mind,
Ere ravage fell!

San Gabriel!

A glamour of the ancient time
Remains with thee! Thou hast the rime
Of some old poem, and the scent
Of some old rose's ravishment
Naught can dispel!

San Gabriel!

From Mexico to Monterey
Thy sisters greet thee 'midst decay;
But thou dost stand a living thing,
And round thee living passions cling
And voices swell!

San Gabriel!

Within thee all my doubtings cease;
I find the holy Prince of Peace;
And feel the thrill of brotherhood
Betwixt my soul and those who stood
For this same faith, for this same world,
And Christ's one flag of love unfurled!

San Gabriel! San Gabriel!

I own thy sweet and mystic spell.

THE VISION OF A MATURE MIND.

I CARE not for the Spring as once I did.

I miss the gladness of those earlier years
When, in the orchard where the robins hid

 Their nests 'mid bloomy coverts, eyes and
 ears

Caught mime and rime of mystic rhapsodies,
As Life and Joy disported 'neath the apple trees.

I thrilled to sense the pulsing of the grass
 And breathe the subtle odors of the ground,

As Nature's resurrection morns did pass

 Into ascension days of light and sound;
I dreamed of love and power, youth's alchemies,
Achievement quickly wrought and swift-sur-
 rendering ease.

I gazed entranced upon th' expansive sky,
And watched the garish clouds, white-
bannered ships,
Sail over heaven's blue main. I felt God's
eye
Impiercing Beauty's wide apocalypse.
I built me vast cathedral fantasies,
And joined the universal anthem of degrees.

But now I dwell amidst the city's strain,
See flaunted Wealth and Fashion's
masquerade,
Hear Toil's deep undertones of hate and
pain,
Witness Life fighting Fate with broken
blade.

My soul is limned with ominous images
Of want, despair, and shame,—and death,—
Sin's sure decrees.

I hear above bird-songs curses of men,
 Heart-sobs of women, little children's wails.
 Beneath the apple blooms there looms the ken
 Of Woe's processions o'er Oppression's
 trails;
 My soul cannot escape earth's tyrannies;
 The sorcerous season palls, the wonted pleasure
 flees.

Gone is the olden gladness of the Spring;
 I feel an alien 'mid its happy throngs;
 While man wounds man, while hearts have
 sufferings,
 Mine is the sphere of life's unrighted
 wrongs.
 I turn back to the world's activities
 To haste Love's golden age as God's high Will
 shall please.

The dreams of lifting up Redemption's Cross,
Holding Faith's torch above the paths of
gloom,

Starting a song of Hope through cells of loss,
Planting Love's roses 'gainst the walls of
doom,—

These are the Springtime's sweetest reveries;
These are Heaven's holy joys beneath earth's
fruiting trees.

THE ASS OF DESTINY.

I SING of a simple creature,
The ass of destiny.
My vision takes strange feature
As eyes of the spirit see
Past veils of the dark and the dust;
And art bends low to the must.

I sing of an animal sign;
I wot not of what I sing,
Beholding the glory shine
From Heaven round earthly thing.
My soul is filled with an awe
Of fate that is upper law.

The Master of sacrifice
Rode triumphing on an ass;
Love furnished the earnest price
For ownership of the pass
Up hell-fought steeps to the plains
Where losses emerge in gains.

Behind the Acceptable Year
What cycles of years there are!
And writ is the history clear
On mystery's calendar
Of this strange ass and the King
Who rode to His suffering.

It came as all others came,—
This creature elect. Who knew
The hovering wings of flame,
The rhythmical retinue

That kept the centuried way
Unhindered for its birthday?

'T was born; but who recognized
The steed of the Prince of Peace?
It grew; but what man surmised
Its worth to the world's increase?
No singular signs it wore.
'T was only an ass,—no more.

At last came the fulness of time;
All time to its fulness comes;
This scourges the poet's rime
To songs of millenniums.
Who knows where such strain belongs
May fashion the ages' songs.

A purpose; a fact to be;
 Betwixt them long ignorance
That counts that the race is free
 And time and the world are chance,
And all that happens fulfils
The folly of fugitive wills.

So be it for thee, thou blind
 To song, and thou deaf to light!
In loftier realms of the mind
 Eyes hearken and ears have sight;
For music and flame are one
Where wings of seraphim run.

The prophets are not extinct;
 Innumerable as the stars
They live unbeholden, linked
 With God past visible bars;

They speak; Love hears and affirms
Fulfilment in mystic terms.

Time understands; and the air
Has knowledge; and force beholds;
The angels guard; and the care
Of sainthood's heart unfolds.
What was, is, and is to be
Is scion of Destiny.

A little enlarged to much
In prophecy's aftermath;
Who kens when the King may touch
The trivial in thy path,
And prove it predestinate,
The hinge of the ages' fate?

Walk softly, O soul, and watch!

Thou knowest not at what turn
The commonest thing may catch

The glory of Heaven, and burn
Before thee, and show the edge
Of infinite privilege.

THE BIRDS OF LOVE.

HIGH Love lets loose his singing birds
In every heart that yields to him.
These are the poet's runic words
For what the Muses limn.

O Love! I yield my heart to thee;
To thee most leal my heart belongs;
Come, birds of skyey royalty,
And sing your happy songs!

My orchard trees are all in bloom,
And waiting for your quiring moods:
Come, mingle with the Spring's perfume
Your fluting interludes!

O birds of Love, the wild, the tame!

I crave each aery fugitive.

Who holds to Love may boldly claim

All boons which Love can give.

O birds of Love, how blithe you are!

Bright waftures from his tropic breast.

Love changes Nature's calendar

And turns the east wind west.

O birds of Love, what cheer you make!

There is no discord in your notes;

'T is Love alone has power to wake

Song-bursts from silent throats.

O birds of Love, your carollings

With joyance fill each fragrant spray!

Love's is the only voice that sings

The perfect roundelay.

O birds of Love 'twixt earth and sky!

Build firm your nests, bring forth your
young.

Ascension things fast multiply

Wherever Love has sprung.

O birds of Love, you vanish not

With warnings of the Winter's strain!

Love keeps the heart a Summer spot

And all his birds remain.

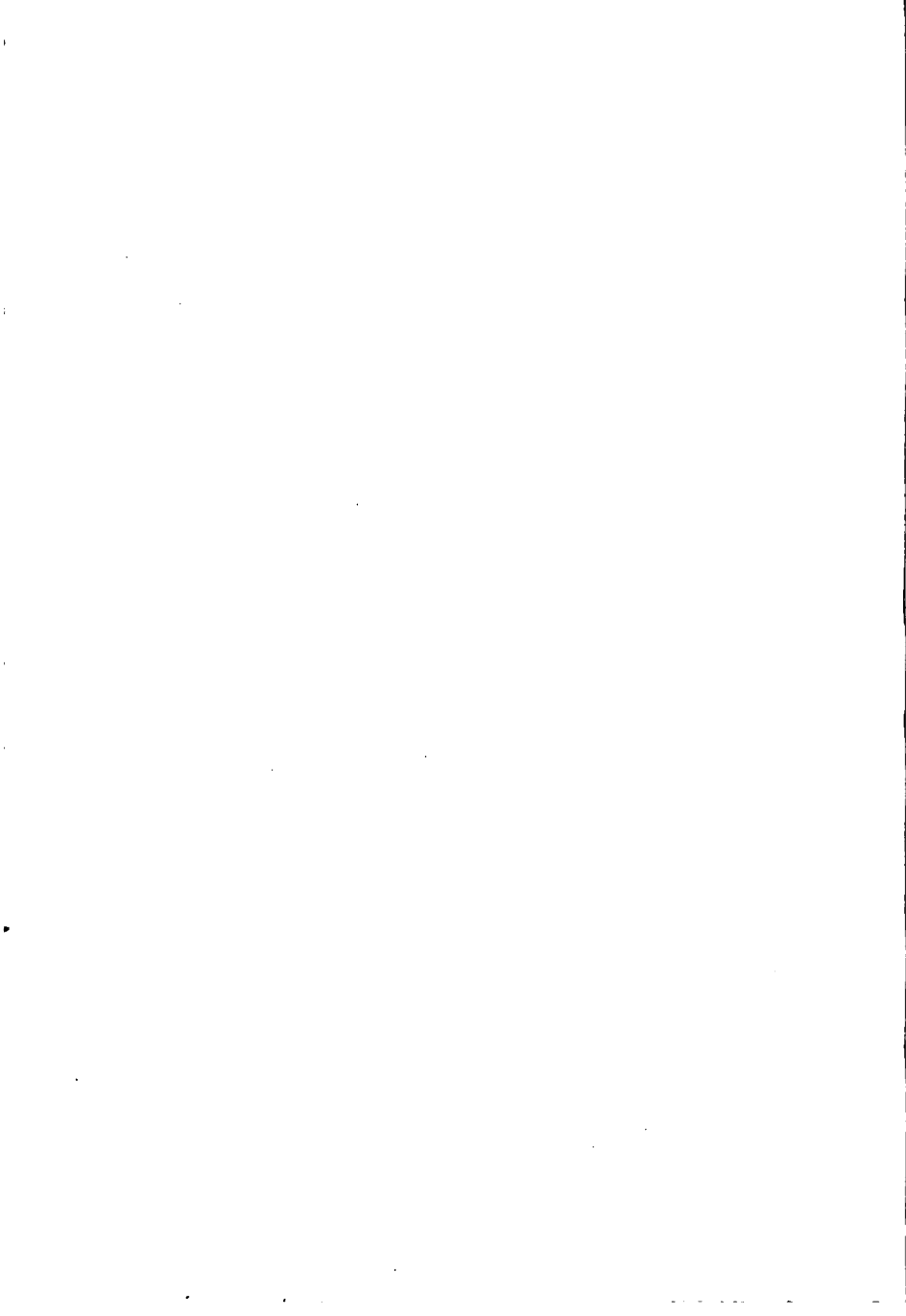
High Love's ethereal comradery!

Fulfilment of the poet's words!

The heart can never lonely be

With Love's sweet singing birds.

MADRIGALS.



I.

TILL THE DAY GOES BY.

A FACE to a sky of blue,
A heart to a song;
With wild birds singing through
The whole day long;
And roses crimson and white
Across my face
Blown hard in the wind's delight
With perfume and grace;
I lie and dream to the sky,
And sing to my heart,
And dream and sing till the day goes by
And the birds depart.

II.

ALAS!

MY heart is sad with waiting, Love,
Waiting for thee.

My eyes are dim with watching, Love,
Watching for thee.

The sunlight fades, the night draws nigh,
The stars come forth in the clear sky,
I sit alone, alone and sigh,—
Sighing for thee.

My heart is faint with longing, Love,
Longing for thee.
My eyes are worn with weeping, Love,
Weeping for thee.

The night-winds murmur as they pass,
Trailing thy name through the long grass,
My soul cries out, alas! alas!

Alas for me!

III.

A DEAR COMPLEXITY.

MY Sweetheart, Sweetheart mine!
I love but thee, but thee,
Thou dear complexity,
Half human, half divine!
Thy graces ever shine
Each day on me, on me;
Without thy face to see,
Each day my heart would pine,
And joy would slowly surely be
Only a haunting memory.

IV.

PRAIRIE QUEEN.

MY heart is a great prairie
Close-bounded about by sky,—
Blue sky of God, with a rim
Of yellow and red, and aery;—
Sweet wealth of the thoughts that lie
Past graces where trace is dim.

Down deep in the sacred centre,
Bloom-wise to the rising sun,
Art thou, my Prairie Queen!
Whose waftures of fragrance enter
My spirit, and make it one
With Love and the world unseen.

My God and my Queen are sufficient,
On prairie or mountain range;
I ask nothing more nor less,—
His compassing power omniscient,
Her love that can never change,
Their fusion of tenderness.

V.

IF LOVE ABIDES.

WHAT grief can break the heart
If Love abides?
Whate'er betides
Sweet Love can heal the smart.

He with divinest art
Swift help provides;
What grief can break the heart
If Love abides?

His words new courage start;
Despair subsides;
And sorrow hides
In unknown ways apart;
What grief can break the heart
If Love abides?

VI.

LOVE'S COMING.

I N Springtide days of splendor,
When speech was blithe and tender,
And all the world of hearts was young
and strong,
Love came with wooing graces,
Slipped out from shining spaces,
With lifted lute and lips for perfect song.

On floating wings he lingered
In aureoles, and fingered
The shimmering strings and sang a song
to me.

He sang so sweet, a feeling
Of sunlit pinions stealing
 Around me bound my soul in ecstasy.

With one long note of rapture
He turned, as if to capture
 Some wildering fragrance blown across his
 way;
Then suddenly ascending
He vanished, like the spending
 Of light behind a cloud of fading day.

Through weary years of yearning
I wait for Love's returning
 And never comes he back nor heeds my cry;
But all my heart is ringing
With echoes of his singing:
 Oh, come, sweet Love, again before I die!

VII.

THE HEART OF SPRING.

I ROSE from my sleep
 When thou didst call;
I broke from the keep
 Of Winter's thrall;
The frost-time scorning
I hailed the morning
 To dwell with thee and Life.

I gazed on the skies
 When thou didst smile;
I felt in thine eyes
 The sun's warm guile;

My dark robes leaving
I donned light's weaving
To dwell with thee and Joy.

I harked to the birds
When thou didst sing;
I heard in thy words
The heart of Spring;
The treetops' quiring
I left, desiring
To dwell with thee and Song.

I scented the South
When thou didst kiss;
I drained at thy mouth
The cup of bliss;

From earthly storing
I turned adoring
 To dwell with thee and Love.

With thee I dwell,
 My goddess sweet!
I feel the spell
 Around thy feet;
'T is earth ascending,
'T is Spring unending
 To dwell with thee and Faith.

VIII.

JUST SHE.

HOW beautiful are the days of Spring!
But what if there be no heart to sing?
Who cares for the bluebird's note
If one sweet voice is still,
And silent the only throat
That set the earth athrill?
'T was Love that made the Spring for me,—
My Love, just She, just She.

How beautiful are the days of Spring!
But what if there be no heart to sing?

Who cares for the May's perfume
If one sweet flower is dead,
And vanished the only bloom
That life with joy o'erspread?
'T was Love that unmade the Spring for me,—
My Love, just She, just She.

How beautiful are the days of Spring!
And what if there be a heart to sing?
There's rapture that conquers grief,
When one sweet soul exists
Past death, and assures belief
In Heaven's evangelists.
'T is Love that remakes the Spring for me,—
My Love, just God and She.

SHAKESPEARE.

IMMORTAL Shakespeare,—he who loved Great
Love

And built him thrones where'er his genius made
Dead ages live! Within the heart of Rome,
Above the Cæsars, set he One whose grace
Turned catacombal darkness into light
To daze the world; and in the pagan North,
And past the confines of the sunset sea,
Wrought spiritual kingdoms, bulging forth
The ancient walls of custom into wreck
With the new throne-rooms of the Nazarene.

Death has one pang,—the leaving of my books;
But am I loth to leave the written word
To find the speaking master? Such great souls
As claim, unclaiming, worthy reverence
From those who find their own exceeding worth
In the re-birth of spirit at the touch
Of genius, the sky-flash of earthly souls,
Are as the sea that flings the surf ashore
In long thin edges of encurling foam,
But has its deeps unfathomable, breadths
For mighty ships, and mounts and gulfs of wave,
Close-kindred to the moon and all the stars.

The surge of Shakespeare's soul along the edge
Of our great Anglo-Saxon continent,
By night, by day, through changing seasons'
tides,
We hear; we hearken, laughing, praising Heaven

For seashore such as ours, and our great sea.
But out afar, 'mid mists that have not lifted,
Lie the vast breadth and depth of Shakespeare's soul,

Of which King Lear and Hamlet and Macbeth
Are but the earthward foam. To leave this
shore

Is to sail outward on yon open sea,
And sailing hear the rhythm of yeasty deeps
Fierce-tossed with mighty billows, feel the force
Of under-fathoms and the straining moon,
And see round prow and stern in silver wake
To starboard, larboard, gulfward, crestward rise
Afar and near, round, round on every wave,
Innumerable Ariels and Prosperos,
And all the gloam and lustre of all lands,
All camps and courts, all huts and palaces,
And all that build their worlds for all delight,
Forever greatening with eternity;

And ours the ship, and ours the captain strong,
And ours the vision,—vision of high things.

Farewell, ye hither powers, the while there works
The unadulterate air my soul has breathed
From o'er yon thither far Shakespearian main!
Not merman, mermaid, Neptune's hoary form
With mythic trident of the aery wave,
Are luminous and rhythmic as yon shapes
I see arising, plunging, dashed with foam
Effulgent with the light of farther suns.

Farewell, ye hither powers! sweet books adieu!
Ye sands and foam and narrow shore farewell!
We will sail outward to the open sea.

BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH SYMPHONY.

AN IMPRESSION.

POCO SOSTENUTO. VIVACE.

THE dead Christ starts; the dual pall of night
Falls wrested from the Galilean's face;
Death flees before imperious hosts that
chase,
With swords of splendor and white spears of
light,
Wan wraiths of agonies and lingering sight
Of scarred Golgotha in divine disgrace.
The red dawn quivers, and the burthened
space
Strains with the passion of immortal night.

BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH SYMPHONY 63

ALLEGRETTO.

The dead Christ arises; the grave is defeated;
the stone
Is rolled away by the angels; from far
empyrean
Tumultuous ravishment, mystical
flutterings,
White whirlwinds of cherubim wondrous and
worldward flown.
On one skyward billow of song the trium-
phant Judean
Moves into the glory and gladness and
wafture of wings.

PRESTO. PRESTO MENO ASSAI.

Waking Easter lilies lift their eyes
To the weeping gaze of Magdalene.

64 BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH SYMPHONY

Pageants pass bewildering between
Dawn and morn, and all things seem to rise.
Mystery casts off its dim disguise;
Power leaps from the luminous Nazarene;
Life has won; the leaves of hope are green;
Love's rose blossoms; earth is Paradise.

FINALE: ALLEGRO CON BRIO.

Heaven is emptied of angels; the jubilant legions,
Mists of sweet minstrelsy, orient shadows
of care,
Whirling and swirling encircle with
pæan and laughter.
Strong with the infinite strength to the infinite
regions
Rises the Crucified, swift on the tides of
the air,
Drawing the worshipping ages in ec-
stasy after.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

I NEVER saw him face to face,—

 This poet with his generous grace.

Yet oft have I beheld his soul

In singing robes, while through me stole

A subtle joyance that renewed

My faltering faith's ascension mood,

Whose sweet persistence made it part

Of inspiration's life and art.

A mystic voice within me saith:

“He lives and sings; who cries out ‘death’?”

CHINA.

IMPERIAL China, immemorial born,
Beyond the offing of the Orient seas!
Thy natal star flamed in the misty morn
Of far-off centuries.

We of a later day and younger age
Touch hands on thine, and feel the fee-
bling beat,
The languor of thy lessening heritage,
Life's flow from founts effete.

Our ears are toward thy pleading unto us,
The lisping of thy hoarse and hoary lips;

Thy semblant music trembles ominous
From faltering finger-tips.

In vain thy veteran search; now would we guide
Thy feet aback to Paradisean streams,
Whence softly flows the blest ancestral tide
Of thy Confucian dreams.

Beside those fountains pure thou shalt not rest
And dull thy passion unto popped mood;
But drinking deep, of primal power possessed
And childhood's sanctitude,

Thou shalt press onward toward the farther
goal,
Maturer being, mellower strains repeat,
Matutine music of the larger soul,
Redemption's chorus sweet.

Thou shalt attain the land which grace endues;
 Its white noon dimless, its camellian airs
Hymnic with hope, and all its avenues
 Love's golden thoroughfares.

Forward, O China! for the Christ appears
 Upon the shadows of thy centuried loss;
And thou shalt find, through all the widening
 years,
 Thine Eden at His Cross.

ARS ARTIUM.

I.

AN architect builded a palace of stone
Of exquisite form and hue,
With bronze colossi and pillared zone
Of porphyry purpled through.

The master boasted and proudly swore
That unto the end of time
His house should endure, and forevermore
Resound with his praise sublime.

Passed swiftly by a year and a day;
 An earthquake shattered the place;
The palace of splendor tottered and lay
 A ruin in earth's embrace.

II.

A sculptor, centuries long ago,
 Carved out of the marble white
An Aphroditè, with face to show
 The glory of Love's delight.

The people wondering worshipped, bound
 By spells of the goddess fair,
Foam-swathed, wind-wafted, with roses crowned
 Queen-Beauty of earth and air.

The sculptor and people ceased to be;
And afterward ravening came
A vandal horde from the northern sea,
And cast her to wreck and flame.

III.

A painter captured a rainbow and wrought,
With pigments of Paradise,
The Virgin Mother of Christ, and caught
The wonder-light in her eyes.

The picture hung in the altar glow;
And through the cathedral air,
From vaulted roof unto tiles below,
It hallowed the place of prayer.

But time was ruthless; the colors waned;
Half-veiled seemed the face devout;
The shining features grew dark and stained
And the vision faded out.

IV.

A great musician, his genius fired
To passion's supreme degree,
By heavenly orchestras inspired,
Created a symphony.

It swept from a hundred instruments
A whirlwind of consonance;
The throngs, bewildered with art's ascents,
Were held in ineffable trance.

The morning came with impetuous mood
O'er-breaking the night's demur;
But the music was not for the multitude
Without an interpreter.

V.

A poet fashioned a song and gave,
Like Noah's ultimate dove,
The soul of his soul to wind and wave;
And swiftly the bird of love

Found rest and covert for welcome wings,
And nested in gladdened hearts;
And nourished her brood of quiring things,
Song's numberless counterparts.

The poet vanished; but sweet and strong,
In ravishing roundelays,
The poet's soul and the poet's song
Live on in the world always.

SONNETS.



THE SONNET.

THE poet's burnished glass of thought
Held up to Nature's daily lure,
Whereon each pageant mood is caught
In radiant miniature.

Life's near inclusive form of things;
Love's narrowing circumference,
Wherein Grief's gathered glory springs
And Joy's delights condense.

The ancient song of poet tongue;
The modern lilt of poet lips;
Th' elect of Art, forever young,
Unknowing time's eclipse

I.

THE TREE AND THE ROSE.

A GREAT green tree grew 'neath the southern
skies

O'erspread with great white roses; every-
where

Upon it, like a thatch, with gleam and
glare,

The flowers lay thick and fragrant. In surprise
I gazed, and marked a bush beside it rise

The twain entwining, each the other's care,
Tree strength, rose blossom, an expanding
pair,—

Together one rose-tree to poet eyes.

Thus is it, my Belovèd, my White Rose!

God set thee at my side, and thou dost
climb,

Mixing with mine thy soul's ascension
power.

Each through the other to completeness grows;

And my life's glory is my Rose of rime,

And my life's gladness is my heart in
flower.

II.

LIKE LOVE IN HEAVEN.

BELOVÈD, I would have thee love me true
As lovers do in Heaven, whose opened
eyes

Behold, without the flesh that falsifies,
The ageless soul in beauty fresh and new.

Belovèd, I would have thy spirit view

Th' enlarging life which deep within me
lies,

And know that what will make thy
Paradise

Hereafter now is thine for thee to woo.

My life is thine to take and take again;

My heart is for an Eden unto thee;

And love shall never lose its golden
prime.

Oh! love me now as thou wilt love me then,

Seeing me somewhat as the angels see,

Knowing me unimpaired by loss and
time.

III.

LOVE'S IMMORTALITY.

BELOVED, shall we change as we grow old?
Shall this great love of ours that every-
where,

In look, in word, in daily tender care,
Burns like high-leaping flame grow ever cold?
If we but knew years hence we should behold
This same sweet glory, that our lives would
wear

These same bright crowns of joy, our hearts
could bear
Each cross, each loss, by deathless love consoled.

Sweetheart, I fear not, knowing love's true sign,
Knowing love's changeless law and ageless
life;

And since thou art God's perfect gift
to me,

And God is love, our love is love divine
Which cannot alter, but is ever rife
With deepening proofs of immortality.

IV.

MY SERAPHIM.

MY books, dear comrades, each a constant
guest

Beside my humble hearth; a waiting quire,
Minstrels of thought to sing as I desire;
The master-host of time all dispossessed
Of earthliness, in garb immortal dressed;
My sacred seraphim that fan the fire
Of smouldering power, till 'neath their
grace aspire

White flames of poesie on skyward quest.

Chant on, life-bearers, from your thrones of
peace!

And I will strike my lyre; perchance my
soul,

Set to the measures of perpetual
prayer,

May add one note to your rich harmonies,

And, through the service of your bounteous
dole,

The fadeless robes of inspiration wear.

V.

SAINT MICHAEL'S.

'T WAS midnight, and I stood outside the door
Of the great hospital's benignant close;
The fevered city lay in deep repose;
I rang; a sister answered; with heart sore
I faced a bed where flesh and spirit tore
At shame's red robes 'mid death's convulsing throes:
I flashed hope's skyward lights; upbraidings rose
Infuriate with lust's demonial lore.

At last I stood without; the morning's beams
Shone on the portal; but a horror stole
Across my brain working revulsion's
spell.

Behind each door what is? and what man
dreams?

I loathed the forced achievement of my
soul—

Culture in holiness through sight of
hell.

VI.

DAY-DREAMS.

THE best I know is what I may not know,
My day-dreams, psychic auras that surround

My spirit's inmost working, being ground
And sky for all the trees of life that grow
Bearing ideals. Thus does God bestow

My mystical becomings 'neath all sound,
All sheen of earth, where soul and sense
unbound

Are penetrant with Heaven's creative flow.

I know the best is what has never been;

And next, the knowing,—faith's foresight
of things,—

Cities of God for them who dare to
trust.

So silent grow I, sing I, feeling kin

To oracles, apocalyptic kings,

And every soul that climbs o'er death
and dust.

VII.

TENNYSON.

THE Laureate Alfred, chief of Arthur's
knights,

A greater than the mighty Lancelot,
Clomb up the thousand steps, and, faltering
not,

Clove through the portal of the fiery lights.

He gazed unswooning on the awful sights

Across the swath of mystic flame, and got

Eyes to the naked chalice, waxing hot

With poet passion on immortal heights.

His soul, white-heaten in the Muses' fire,
Seven-times refined passed on and did
prevail;

And now, in samite of his pure desire,
On open vision glows the Holy Grail.
Victorious knight amid great angels strong!
We will ascend thy thousand steps of song.

VIII.

PRINCETON.

REPOSEFUL spot horizoned by the stress
Of thunderous cities! Here stern Nature
seems

One verdurous peace, an atmosphere of
dreams,

With ever-lilting languorous caress.

Yet everywhere a laborous mightiness,

A fine vibration, youthly anvilled, streams,—

Felt music, muted clangor, wisdom's themes

Turning to vantage for the world's redress.

This is the armory of intellect

Where swords of thought are wrought for
lords of strife,

The while th' enfreedomed spirit beats
down brawn

On the last lines of darkness, stands erect,

Grasping the vision of dominion life,

And cries, "*The Day!*" across the
reddening dawn.

LYRICS.

I.

THE SAME OLD LOVE.

LOVE is ever young.

Albeit Life feels time's growing age,
Albeit Life sees earth's slowing wage,
Love has the same melodious golden tongue.

Love is ever strong.

Albeit Life feels time's heavying cross,
Albeit Life sees earth's levying dross,
To Love the same imperial hands belong.

Love is ever glad.

Albeit Life feels time's galling chains,
Albeit Life sees earth's falling fanes,
Love's heart keeps fresh the early joy it had.

Love is ever true.

Albeit Life feels time's ailing lyre,
Albeit Life sees earth's failing fire,
Love is the same old Love forever new.

II.

A SOUL'S RETURN.

I HEARD a strange but familiar song
Above the noise of the hurrying throng.

It drifted out of a window set
With heliotrope and mignonette.

It seemed the voice of Love's oracle,
A heavenly music that earthward fell.

It was my own wrought melody;
It was my soul come back to me.

III.

ATMOSPHERE.

I WONDER so!

Such holy sweetness wraps my soul,

An atmosphere that takes control

Of all my nature, claiming all

In swift abandon to the thrall

Of Love's deep ebb and flow.

Hold, doubting heart!

This is a soul become a breath

For my soul's breathing. My soul saith:

"I drink thee, sink thee into me,
Thou kindred spirit mystery,
And mixed with me thou art!"

Stop, questioning sense!
I yield myself entranced and still,
And let this subtle aura fill
My being's rapt interior frame,
Whose quivering ecstasies proclaim
Love's secret evidence.

O wonder, cease!
Nor space, nor clay is barrier
To this caressing breath of her,
That woos my heart from hour to hour,
Imbues with Love's ethereal power
And Love's imperial peace.

Sweet spirit lore!

This is the truest, realest

Of thought, of love, the essence blest

That blends in full communion

Two mated beings into one,—

One soul forevermore

IV.

THE CAPTAIN ON THE BRIDGE.

THE night is nigh,
The sea is high,
The dashing waves o'erwhelm;
But all serene,
With vigil keen,
The captain's at the helm.
Across the sea
He pilots me
Through gulf and foaming ridge;
I know no fear,
For he is near,—
My captain on the bridge.

In mist and storm,
 His beaten form
 Moves all the long night through;
 He knows the path
 The great ship hath,
 And steers her straight and true.
 Across the sea
 He pilots me
 Through gulf and foaming ridge;
 I know no fear,
 For he is near,—
 My captain on the bridge.

I have no chart
 Nor seaman's art
 For ocean's thoroughfare;

But undistressed
I calmly rest,
And trust my captain there.
Across the sea
He pilots me
Through gulf and foaming ridge;
I know no fear,
For he is near,—
My captain on the bridge.

O soul astrain
On life's rough main!
Thy Captain's in command;
And, tempests past,
In port at last
Thy bark will safely land.

106 THE CAPTAIN ON THE BRIDGE

Across the sea
He pilots thee
Through gulf and foaming ridge;
Have thou no fear,
For He is near,—
Thy Captain on the bridge.

V.

RETROSPECTION.

THE years are grim because of me,
 Before and after, Judgment saith;
I go the way of misery
 And tread the purple grapes of death.

Offence is all forgiven, but still
 The crimson scars in heart and flesh
Are mockers of the later will
 And start the olden pangs afresh.

It is not love I failed to win;
It is not unrewarded strife;
It is the man I might have been
That makes the tragedy of life.

VI.

GENESIS.

THE outlet of eternity
 Into the sweep of time;
Gateway through which life's great to-be
 Has issuance sublime;
Love's tidal mystery set free
 In history and rime.

First measure of the music far
 The centuries prolong;
The melody of morning star;
 The moon's empyreal song;
Creation's fugue oracular;
 World-preludes sweet and strong.

Primeval glow of Providence
 Upon the quickening spheres;
Foregleams of grace auroral whence
 Shall glide the widening years;
Sunrise of life's immortal sense
 Across earth's misty meres.

Beginning of the winding way
 The feet of Love have trod,—
Love's bruised feet, by night, by day,
 With priestly sandals shod;
Breaking the path for men astray
 That they may mount to God.

VII.

THE SILENCE OF GOD.

I SAT at the feet of the King,
With face toward His face divine;
“My Father! answer my questioning!
Speak Thou of the things to be mine,
The kingdom to which I am heir,
The wealth and power I shall share!”

But God was still;
I bowed my will;

And through me there softly stole
A sweetness the heavens forspend;
And somehow I knew I shall know when my soul
Is able to comprehend.

The silence of God is His loudest word.
O Love! I have heard, I have heard.

VIII.

MY FATHER.

O GOD of rest!

Thy watchful care has safely kept
My soul from evil while I slept;
Thy guardian love has been my shade;
Thy healing touch has strength conveyed;
In mystic sleep destroyed Thou hast
The disenchantments of the past;
In life renewed, in frame reborn,
I wake and praise Thee with the morn,

O God of rest,

My Father!

O God of dreams!

By night Thou hast revealed to me
Chambers of precious imagery;
The fresher air, the farther lights,
My native world upon the heights,
Dear faces of the earlier time,
Loved voices with the olden rime.
I view my hope mount from eclipse,
I hail my heart's apocalypse,

O God of dreams,

My Father!

O God of light!

When morning's beams my slumbers break
I feel Thy presence as I wake;
About me floats an atmosphere
All crystalline, most pure and clear,

Charged with Thy tender Fatherhood,
Through which I sense th' Eternal Good
In pulsings of high purpose beat;
And all my soul lies at Thy feet,

O God of light,

My Father!

O God of life!

From sleep and dreams I turn, I spring,
To greet my being's Sire and King.
Refreshed and strong I now present
Myself a humble instrument
By which Thy covenant may pursue
Its course of love the whole day through.
Accept me, let the joy be mine,
Of service 'neath Thy yoke divine,

O God of life,

My Father!

O God of love!

What blessed guerdons Thou dost give!
The grace to grow more sensitive
To every rhythm; the subtle power
To see the far-off full-blown flower
Of every seed; the ecstasy
Of secret comradeship with Thee;
The glory, only faith may win,
Of working out what Heaven works in;

O God of love,

My Father!

WHEAT AND HUSKS.



I.

FRUIT OF THE THRESHING.

THE wheat of the soul! God's grain!
The seed of centuried sowing,
The fruit of celestial growing,
The harvest of infinite pain.

For each inspiring thought,
And every conception high,
Descends from the azure sky,
By heavenly forces brought.
All things in the soul that are good
Are out of God's bountihood.

The earth is a threshing-floor;
 Upon it the harvest lies,
 A mixture that signifies
The perfected fruited store,
 When under the flail's laborious art
 The wheat and the husk dispart.

II.

THE NEED OF THE HUSK.

O HUSK, thou art more than husk!
The wheat had need of thee;
Thy worth is the destiny
Thou gavest the day at dusk.

Without the husk there had been no wheat,
No bread for man to eat;
Strong life had withered, sweet love had failed,
And all the world had wailed.
Without the husk there had been no flower
To all thought's processes of power;

No ship sea-riding from shore to shore;
No word sea-piercing through cable's core;
No muscle's venture; no spirit's climb;
No engine's motion; no poet's rime;
No restful temple; no laborous mart;
No science, history, or art;
No children's laughter; no mother's song;
No manhood's glory that rights the wrong;
No home, no state, no hope, no faith;
But only desert and brooding death.

III.

THE RIME OF THE REFUSE.

THE poet is true to the glume;
No cheating of negatives!
He sings of each thing that lives
And goes unsung to its doom
For sake of the world's advance;
He sees what the refuse is,
Its mystical dignities,
And rimes it with high romance.

Each speck of dust has a fleck of sky
That's open with bluest blue;

And he who raises unveiled eye,
And gazes fast therethrough,
Beholds the heavens close-pressed to earth,
And vanishing things' eternal worth.

IV.

LOSS AND GAIN.

THE poet of Nature discerns somehow,
In psychical moments when
The very zodiac seems to bow
And seizes bewildered ken
With signs and symbols, whose lights rehearse
What is and shall ever be,
The changing prose of the universe
One changeless poesie.

I sing of the husk: I sing of the wheat;
The chaff that is trampled beneath men's feet;
The grain that is garnered to make life sweet.

The things of the subtle soul are twain,
The fruit for loss and the fruit for gain;
All things are the husks that are not the grain.

V.

THE HUSK'S GLORY.

I SING of the wheat for what it will do;
I sing of the husk for what it has done;
And, praising the wheat 'neath the harvest
sun,
I give to the husk its glory true;
And thus is the poet's moment-music one
With Nature's centuried song forever new.

The husk is grown for the wheat;
The evil exists for the good;
Methinks the archangels understood
When man met his first defeat.

Some prophets have fathomed the mystery
Beholding what was and is to be.
Some souls have entered Edenic gate
 Since Cherubim swords were set
 With holy forbidding flame,
And wandered over those meads of Fate,
 Faced Love by his side who let
 Man's glory dismount to shame.

VI.

THE STARTING OF SORROW.

O VENTURESOME poet, who hast betimes
Strange vision of things past earth's despair,
Be cautious, immure thy mystic rimes!

Thou may'st not all thou see'st declare,—
How man and Fate met face to face,
In Eden's most exalted place

Hard by the tree of destiny;
How Deity did there permit
The finite 'gainst the Infinite

To set unbending brow and knee;
And why th' Eternal Power withdrew,
When Nature's golden age was new,

And all the sin and sorrow started
By which the earth and sky were parted,
And all man's high desires
Became but smouldering fires,
For Love's superior pain,
And Life's ulterior gain,
Let God and Time explain!
And keep thou still,
Thou seer of good and ill!

VII.

GOD AND THE WRONG.

I COUNT on God for wherefore and whence,—
God's omnipresent omnipotence;
The selfsame Maker of men and stars
And star-laws and laws of the soul,
And cycling centuried calendars
Unchanging toward selfsame goal
Beknown, since the primal founts are one
And every shine is sign of the sun.

I will not rail at the wrong;
'T is husk for my golden wheat;

I count it such and will beat
It loose with a threshing song;
Then gather my grain, and for joy of it
Will sing of the husk's sure benefit.

VIII.

THE LAW OF THE EVIL.

GOD somehow gets the good from the ill
And works His unhindered will;
And evil's law is the law of Love,
Love dauntless, knowing the Power above
Must bring each right to its might and throne
And crown it God's chosen own.

I speak of law. 'T is a child that speaks
With knowledge only from inner moods
And deep impulsions that rise and rush

Imperious, as one finds who seeks
And hears the spirit's beatitudes
Across the unfathomable hush;
Nature's proclaiming spell
From deep-set oracle;
The rhythm of sweetness set to awe,
Inseparable love and law;
I give it trust, I will not deny
The voice of God in earth and sky,
And my soul's voices as true as His,
Life's inborn prophecies.

IX.

FATE AND PAIN.

I WILL not rail nor complain
At fate or at pain;
I see them husks to my grain.
I cherish them answers to needs,
Time-servants for destiny's seeds,—
The wheat for eternity's mountains and meads.

I sing of the threshing-floor,
The floor of the soul;
Here lies the harvested store;
For what? Thou knowest the goal

O God! But how hard is the way
Of beating and bruising,
Of pain and confusing,
The only means for the sway
Of right over wrong,
Of wheat over husks and the day
Of garner and song!

X.

A SONG OF THE MYSTICALS.

I SING of the mystical wind
That symbols high energy;
The sweep of the unconfined;
Inbreaking of powers that be
Paroled from Love's unbeholden surge,
Across the heavens' close verge.

I sing of the magical sky
O'er-rushing its azure meres
In waftures that purify
Earth's vaporous atmospheres,

Space, time, and nature from gardens above,
The constant blowing of Love.

I sing of the musical might,
 The motions of spirit that flow
Down realer realms of delight
 Than ever the senses know;
The cadence of severing holiness,
Love's tenderest storm and stress.

I sing of the miracle grace
 That fanneth my threshing-floor;
I yield to its tropic embrace,
 I throw it my bruised store,
Heaven's purging that perfects my freedomed
 grain,
Love's victory through pain.

I sing of the mythical breath;
The Life of the Holy Ghost,
The Power that is death unto Death,
Love unto the uttermost;
The covenant winnowing Passion of God
Reclaiming the soul from the clod.

XI.

BREAK OF THE DAY.

THE hour of the soul appears;
'T is Love's time, break of the day,
That ushers the golden years
And metamorphoses clay,
When pain is no more,—not hence
In nebulous paradise,
But here, in earth's circumference
And under these azure skies;
For the bruising time below
Is past, and the wheat is free;
And only the upper breezes blow
In winnowing ecstasy.

XII.

THROUGH DEATH TO LIFE.

THE soul full-used
Has once been bruised
As th' unseen Thresher willed;
Its fullest worth
To Heaven or earth
Is that which has first been killed.

The brightest hopes
For skyey slopes
Are those that have been consumed;

The highest joys,
Time ne'er accloys,
Are those that have been entombed.

The greatest lives
Where service hives
Are those that have once been slain;
The sweetest songs
The world prolongs
Are those that have come through pain.

The Living Breath
Alone through death
Makes man and Nature real;
Thus he who dies
To self shall rise
And reach his soul's ideal.

XIII.

THE TOUCH OF THE SKIES.

I SING of the winnowed soul;
I sing of the yielded will
For what God would have it be,
Life set unto Love's high goal,
All Heaven let loose to fill
Existence with ecstasy.
The flail shall never be felt again;
The bruising ends, there is no more pain;
What force ennobles and purifies
Shall always be the touch of the skies,

And never the earth's sharp instruments,
But ever the heavens' most sweet descents;
Love's blowing and flowing increasing sweet
And ever the soul's increasing wheat.

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XIV.

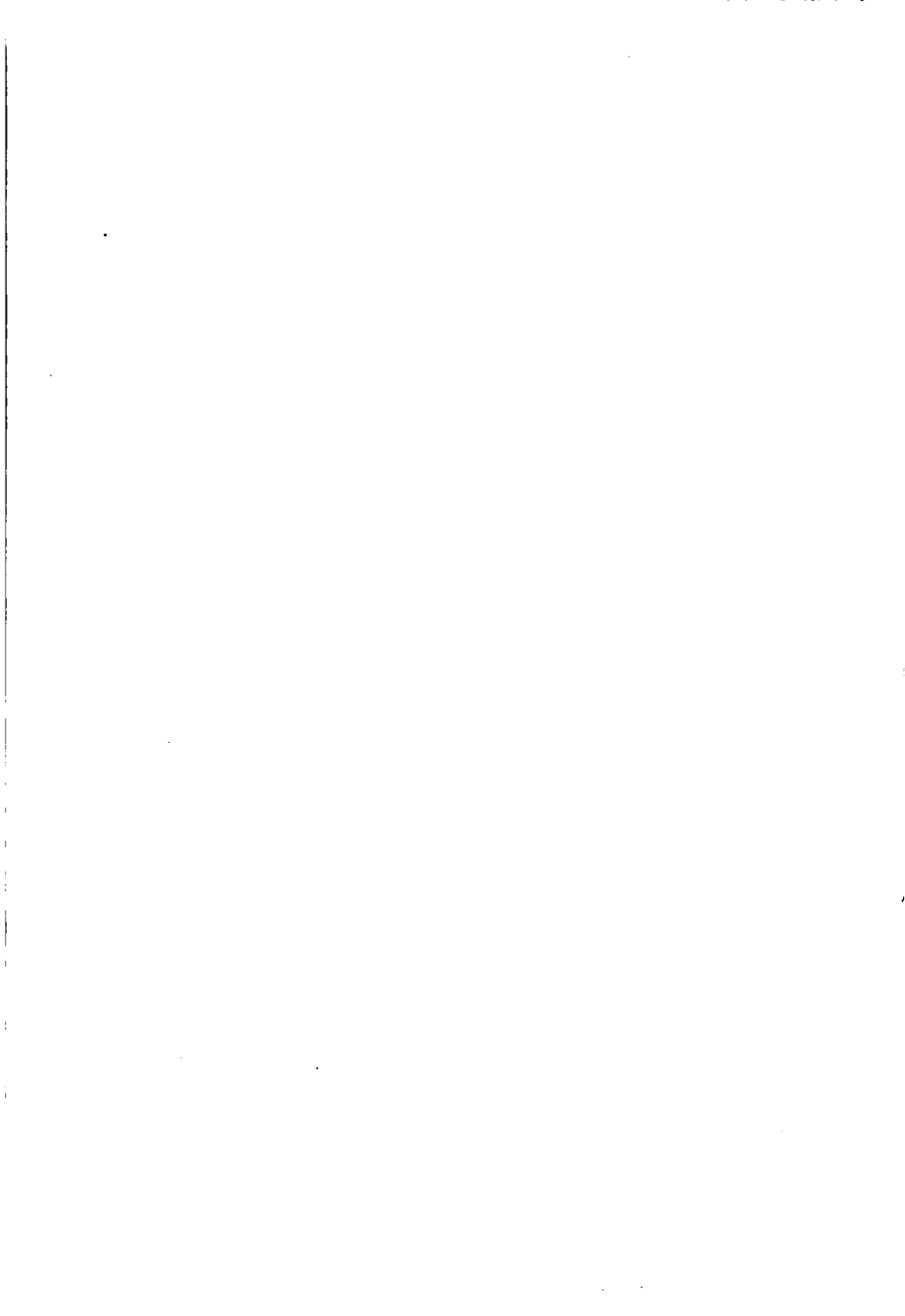
THE CREED OF LOVE.

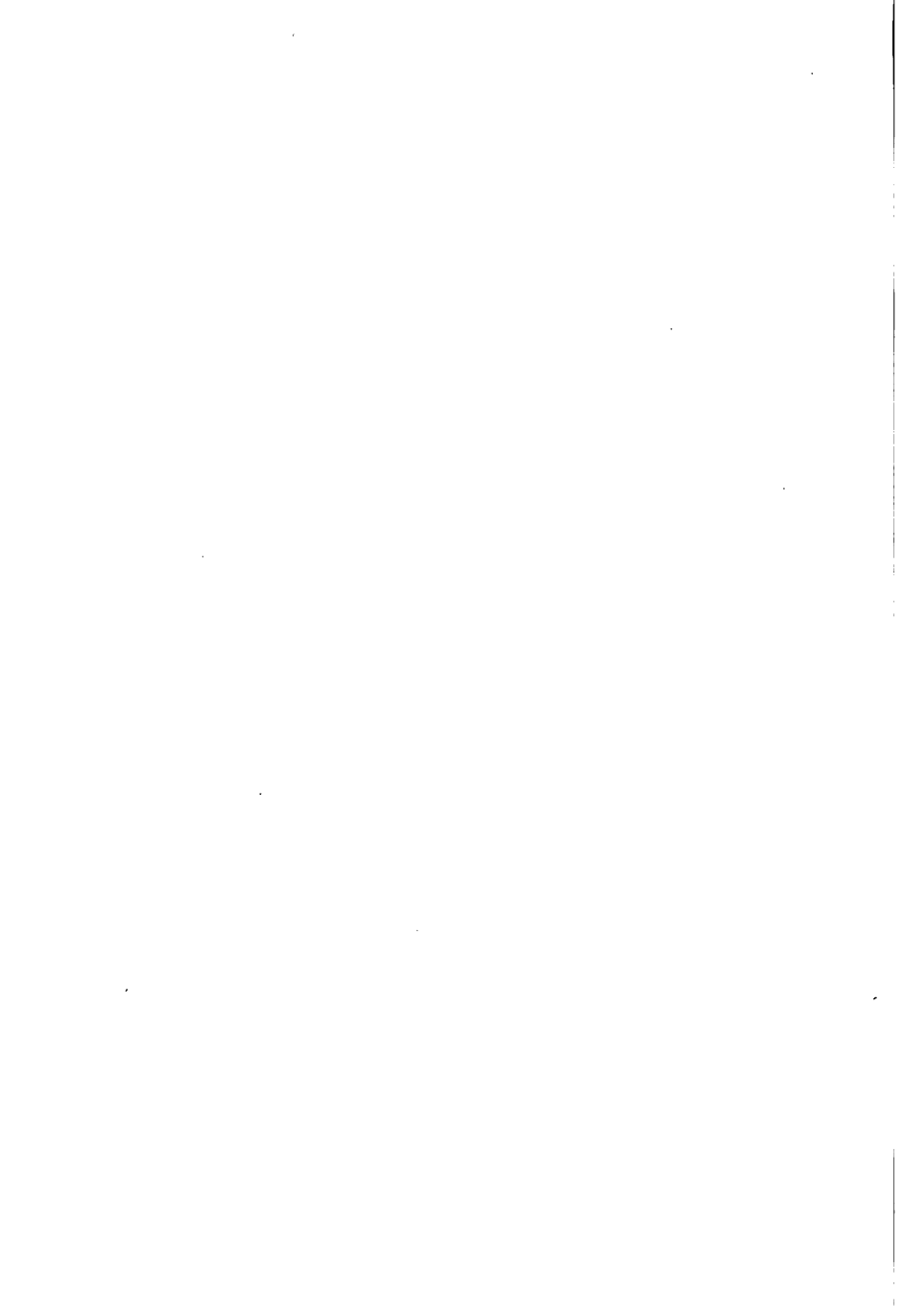
LOVE'S wind makes chaff of the husk
And blows far away the chaff;
The dawn descends into dusk,
And out of my joy I laugh,
And sing as my wheat falls back to me,
Made fit for the granary.

The days of threshing are o'er;
The winnowing time is past;
The wheat from the threshing-floor
Is safely garnered at last;

Stored up for seed and a later spring
And a greater harvesting.

The wheat of my soul is mine
Because it is God's. 'T is He
Who planted the grain divine
And builded the granary,
Who gathers destiny's seeds
With all the heavens in song,
Makes love the creed of all creeds
And man's heart sweet and strong.









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Allen Lyman W.

A parable of the rose

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